DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 306 610 CS 506 605

AUTHOR Cakmak, Sibel
TITLE Snapshots from a Teacher's Inquiry into Foreign Worlds: A Case Study.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 37p.; Document contains light type.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; *Classroom Communication; English (Second Language); Foreign Students; Grade 1; Interviews; *Naturalistic Observation; *Non English Speaking; Primary Education; *Qualitative Research; Reading Instruction; Teacher Role; Teaching Methods; Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS Teacher Researcher Cooperation

ABSTRACT

An investigation is presented of a regular classroom teacher's socio-psycho-linguistic experiences with the non-English speaking children in her classroom. Audiotaped interviews were conducted with Mrs. Walters (pseudonym), a first grade teacher with a large number of foreign students in her classroom. In addition to interviewing the teacher, the study conducted classroom observations and used descriptive and reflexive journals describing the interviews, formal observations, joint debriefing (a meeting between the researcher and teacher), and memberchecks (formal and informal feedback from the teacher). After transcribing each interview, the researcher categorized the information by imposing headings guided by the memberchecks. Categories included: (1) "Teacher as a Role Model for Cultural Diversity"; (2) "Familiar but Foreign"; (3) "Snapshots from Three Non-English-Speaking Foreign Students"; (4) "Inquiry into Reading"; (5) "Understanding Goal-Orientedness"; and (6) "The Foreign Parents." After interviews, observations, and joint debriefing were completed, the researcher organized and compiled the information, imposed a narrative structure on the explanations under each category, and wrote an integrated story that reflected the teacher's construction. Credibility was established through persistent observation, intensive interviewing, joint debriefing, and memberchecks. (MM)

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SNAPSHOTS FROM A TEACHER'S INQUIRY INTO FOREIGN WORLDS: A CASE STUDY

by

Sibel Cakmak

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Naturalistic Inquiry
Spring 1989

CS506605

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INTRODUCTION

As a foreign language major with high interest in cultural diversity, I have always wondered about a regular classroom teacher's socio-psycho-linguistic experiences with non-English speaking children. I began that journey with Mrs. Walters, who took me through a trip into her world, that not only let me hear what I was initially interested in but also what I did not know. Throughout that route, eventually our focus changed to her experiences with all the foreign children. I realized it was not possible for her to disconnect her feelings and experiences with non-English speaking children from her bilingual ones, or even from the American kids. She presented pieces of snapshots that could not make more sense than if they were isolated from one another.

Although I physically embarked her sailing boat my mind is still there with that teacher in her first-grade classroom, in a school at the Indiana University district.

Mrs. Walters is as charming as the beautiful smile she wears, that gleans all over her face. You may run into her in the school corridor rushing to get something to prepare for her kids. In her blue jeans, she is as young and as active as any independent woman would be. Casual and down-to-earth as she can be, her enthusiasm to act out and to communicate is a mirror of "her kids'" energy. In her classroom, she conveys all the characteristics of a caring mother. Mature, joyful and serious she embraces those little different worlds without discriminating among them. She is always on time, early in the morning busy preparing interesting things for the day before her kids arrive.

Her kindergarten son always accompanies her but they get on with their own work. While she is running around til' the last minute a bus load of youngsters start raiding her classroom. She doesn't stop. It's greeting time, a short moment for having the little ones share the continuing bits of entertaining or sad stories from their personal lives. She opens up to them too, something she believes would get them closer and help them understand each other. It's also the time for little hugs, and quick caresses, or pats on the shoulder, a concern to once again tell the newcomers that they are welcome home, not pushed aside by their dear teacher.

Eventually, her beautiful smile fades away, her bright blue eyes focus on theirs as she raises her voice to get them started on serious business. She is now under control wherever she is, able to reach messages to each one of her kids. It's not really a dominant control as she gives it away for all to participate and to discipline them into an atmosphere of independent and responsible work. Mutual respect is what she values and for which she endeavors. Very verbose and organized, she sets her children into relevant words of discovery from where they left the last time they were here.

Throughout the process of her experiences with both the non-English speaking children and the bilinguals, she is a teacher who has learned to empathize, accomodate and compromise.

Let us now take some pictures of Mrs.Walters' world as she tells us her story.

WE EMBRACE DIVERSITY

I have fifteen foreign students in my classroom and nobody thinks that anybody is any different. I think that is what makes us successful here. This place is really an international community. It's great to be in Bloomington and especially to teach in this school where I spent my whole education, years ago, before they singled it out as only an elementary school. "It makes me a better person to e aware of all the different cultures" (#3). I am proud of having this great opportunity. That's why I brought my son to study here although he could go to school in our district. I wanted him to have this kind of atmosphere. Learning about all the different countries, seeing their costumes, sampling their food and developing positive attitudes about other cultures is a great experience.

My son came in the evening and was mentioning somebody in his class, he said, "She is just having a little trouble with English right now but she'll learn it!". (#1) That's the way the kids feel about the foreign students. They are willing to help them. They just think it's not big deal that their friends do not know the language yet. Neither I nor their friends push them aside. So, even when the foreign children cannot speak English, they are not alienated.

TEACHER AS A ROLE MODEL FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY: CREATING A BALANCED CULTURAL ATMOSPHERE IN THE CLASSROOM

I am really open to other cultures and languages. I think my attitude has positive influence on American kids too because no matter at which age, children tend to believe whatever the teacher does is right. I must be extremely careful, however, because I am

a good American who wants to celebrate Washington's and Lincoln's birthday and all this U.S. history. I cannot ignore my own culture from the curriculum because it's very important to me. I have the responsibility to pass on my culture to the future generation. Therefore, the way I handle cultural diversity is to do all the things that are American but to balance it so that the foreign children would not feel alienated. When we celebrate Christmas or Easter I let the foreign children talk about their different holidays. In practice, I make it explicitly clear to all the children that we are open enough to appreciate our cultural differences. I still have to be very careful and tell American kids that if their foreign friends are not celebrating what we are, it's because they have their own celebrations. I stimulate my kids to think open-mindedly, "Let's tell them what we have. Then, they'll be excited to show us what interesting things they have!" (#2). And they do! Those foreign kids fluent in English even bring in stories from their cultures, sometimes, and enjoy telling them to us in English. We try to bridge the gap of our cultural diversities through mutual effort. Partly, our basals also play a role in our cultural exchanges. Today's basals are less white American based unlike the ones I grew up with. Most of the stories, even those telling the experiences of an African or a Puerto Rican child, touch universal topics such as, friendship and family. They become springboards for opening up my foreign children too. Some other channels of international exchange that I use in the classroom are through discussions on geography, and pictures.

Soon, I'm planning to have a "Cultural Bazaar" with my first-grade students. They may represent their countries dressed up in their national costumes. They will share their favorite foods and draw their own flags. We may have five representatives from the United States but that's fine.

FAMILIAR BUT FOREIGN

Among the 15 foreign students that I have in my first-grade classroom this year 7 of them are from Arabic cultural background. The remaining others belong to different cultures. Altogether, I have about 10 foreign kids that are balanced bilinguals. They are fluent speakers in both English and their mother tongues because some were born in the U.S. and some have been living here for three or four years. The remaining 3 or 4 are the ones that are still learning English. Yet, this doesn't mean that I have only been dealing with the problems of non-English speaking foreign children.

This year, I've had the most difficult time with Arabic children and their parents because it took a while for me to learn about the educational goals they set up for their children. It's not that I have never had Arabic students before when I was teaching sixth grade...
They never had the problems their first-grade peers had...
It's just the nature of this year. It happens to be the first time that I have to deal with so many Arabic students that bring in a variety of problems from the opposite worlds in which they participate simultaneously.

SNAPSHOTS FROM MY THREE NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING FOREIGN CHILDREN

Elliot: The Outgoing Little Boy from Malawi

When Elliot came in the beginning of the year he couldn't say a word in English. Now, he is one of the best students in his reading group. Besides, he is an excellent math student.

He still has some trouble with writing but that's just developing. Being a first-grader he has not developed that skill of writing yet. But the difficulty of composing and expressing his thoughts through another language adds to the problem. I can sympathize with him. I think it's so hard to learn a second language as I know from my experiences of learning French at high school. Especially conveying your thoughts in a second language is darn painful, even if you understand your teacher's directions. But I want to help them express their ideas in writing. So, I have the whole class practice journal keeping everyday besides other types of writing. And this little boy is learning to verbalize. When he gets better at that he'll make more progress in witten and other modes of the language.

So far, he has come a long way as a student who could neither say a word nor read in the beginning of the year. He has a great deal of parent support. "That makes a big difference"! (#1). Furthermore, he has a lot of self-initiative towards leaning. He wants to do whatever he is able to accomplish. As an outgoing child, he would always find some way and someone to get the help he needs. Yet, that doesn't mean I do not work with him one-on-one, or do not assign any peer tutors to work with him when I am not available every single minute. He needed those two strategies a lot more in the beginning of the year than he does

now. As he has improved his language, he can now function more independently. He adjusted to the classroom situation quickly because even in the beginning of the year he had that independence and motive to learn. For instance, he would even communicate through gestures to express whatever he did not understand.

Faridah: The Puzzling Little Girl from Saudi Arabia

She is one of the few that has not picked up the English but she does learn more than I think. She just is very shy and doesn't want to speak it. When she has to, I hear her, for instance, scold some of the kids, "No, leave me alone!..." (#1). In fact she can speak some English but most of the time not with me.

She has been here all year. I think a lot of it is that, she is over-protected at home and babied. And then the kids... There are two or three friends of hers that baby her in the same manner, "I'll do this with her!", "I'll show her how!"... (#1). They're almost too much! I use a lot of peer tutoring but there is a difference between helping and doing it for her.

Especially in the beginning of the year, when Faridah wasn't comfortable with me my bilingual Arabic children were the initial bonds between she and I. I would ask the bilinguals to explain whatever I told her in Arabic. Besides, like all the other children she probably had the fear and the shyness of going to school the whole day for the first time. For such reasons, having some friends know that familiar language really helped her. She was a little bit more protected that way.

I have had experiences with children who spoke languages other than Arabic, such as, Spanish or Polish. Using their bilingual peers has sometimes helped them open up to me. Sometimes that's how I can get through at the beginning of the year. I do use a lot of peer tutoring in my classes but I do not seclude the bilingual students for that matter, either. I avoid saying, "You two will be working together all the time" (#2). The peer tutor can be foreign or American. It all depends on who is available and good at a certain skill in that particular time. My purpose in using peer tutors is not to raise children who cannot perform their tasks independently. Peer tutoring helps my kids socialize and gives them the extra help I cannot do so all the time, considering a class of 22 students.

Eventually, the children need also to learn to accomplish their own work independently. That's something to learn in the American school. Yet, I don't leave her alone in her struggle. I work with her one-on-one or in a small group. That would work better for her than communicating in English in a larger group. She is capable but again there is a fine line there.

Other than being under the umbrella of her parents at home, and some of her friends at school, her attendance is extremely poor. "She missed 25 periods out of the grading period of 45 days!" (#6). That's too much! But there isn't much I can do. I refrain myself from putting too much pressure on the family situation because I know that the Arabic school is their primary focus. Interestingly, however, I learned from my other Arabic kids that her attendance is very poor in Arabic school, too and she is behind than all her other Arabic peers. So, I decided it's not

just the English, she might be having some learning problems too. I remember, once I had a foreign child who was almost blind. Thanks to IU optometrists, they regularly check our kids. All that time he couldn't read or function well! Until then, his parents did't know there was something wrong with his sight. As for Faridah, maybe her language skills are not well-developed if she isn't sufficiently read or spoken to at home.

And I have very recently discovered something new about her that might help me understand her situation better. Until the first week of March, I thought she would turn seven this year like a few of my youngest kids. The last time the social worker was here, I told her that she should better get in touch with Faridah's parents so that they can do something about their child's situation. According to law, children should regularly go to school when they're seven. So, just absence can be a reason for retaining them. One day, on one occasion in class I asked, "Faridah, didn't you just turn seven years old?" (#6). She pondered about. Her momentary pause was enough for all of the other Arabic girls to let it come to light, "No, she didn't. She just turned six!" (#6). Then, I felt there was something weird. I think that her parents are just sending her to the American school to be babysit during the day.

She must be having learning problems too, not to mention that she is two grades behind than her peers in the Arabic school. When she speaks English she has accent but I also feel it's not just that. She might be having some speech problems. Our speech specialist cannot diagnose her, however, as neither they

understand Arabic nor she can speak English fluently. Unfortunately, we do not have any cooperation with the Arabic school on those matters. It's only because that's just a private type of school, it's not formal.

So long as she was present in class I've been doing my best to help her to learn something, maybe almost in vain. She maybe too young but I still think that there is no emphasis on learning from her. "You can't say the six year olds cannot decide except their parents" (#6).

I 've been taking her problems very personally because there is no way I can send her to second grade. She lacks a lot of skills. I notified her parents that she is going to be retained in first-grade and that she has a lot of absences but they didn't ever respond. So, I documented all that information on my records to be safe if they ever come and tell me that I never informed them that their child was having trouble in first-grade.

Soon I will have parent conferences and maybe all I can do is to let them know that I will retain Faridah. I also have to find out how long they're going to stay here. They might have plans to leave the country soon. Maybe that's why they do not care that much about their daughter. Besides, I do not want to pressure the parents too much because I'm afraid they might totally stop sending their child to school. Once one of the Arabic girls had some problems with another foreign little boy. She depended so much on that child for doing her own work that the little boy couldn't stand it anymore. He kept telling her not to bother him that much. The girl's father took the problem differently, the way his child explained the situation such that her daughter was

being bothered at school. Since then the girl has been absent although the other Arabic children tell me, whenever I check attendance, that she does go to the Arabic school. Actually, by law, they are supposed to attend the American school because it is their formal school. I feel this is a very sensitive issue because you never know how the family would respond if you had the social worker frequently knock on their door.

Mark:The Brazilian Child Who Arrived a Few Weeks Ago

"I do not retain children because they don't understand English. I retain them because they can't function in the classroom." (#6) So, one initial barrier to a formerly non-English speaking child's progress is not just the language. Neither it is only the language that will inhibit their progress. The factors are too broad and often quite complex. Sometimes like a puzzle! It all depends on each individual child's situation.

Mark has just come from Brazil three weeks ago but I will send him to second-grade because he can function as a first-grader. He speaks almost no English but at least, he can copy from the board, he can do all his math... His ability to function might make more sense considering that he just finished first grade in December before coming here from Brazil. We decided to have him repeat the same grade just to have him learn the language and adjust to the school environment.

Yet, it is very different to have a child come in the middle of the year than at the beginning. At this moment, there are no children who are starting English. So, I do not have any

appropriate reading group where I can place him. I just have him in one of my reading groups where he just sits and listens. My experiences with other kids has showed me that they pick up so much by just listening.

In helping this little boy I'm also educating the whole family. His mother can't speak English but he has an aunt who does. The two families stay together, an extended family situation.His aunt usually comes and asks about Mark and wants me to give her some suggestions for working with him at home. I give them books to take home and tell them to teach him a list of basic basal words that I find crucial for his reading. His relatives translate them to Portuguese by which he memorizes the list. Once he accomplishes that it becomes easier for him to understand what he reads, as he now sees the words in a meaningful context.

Then, I have a practicum field student from IU who works with him everyday. I also read with him everyday. A lot of times understanding directions is one of the greatest difficulties of non-English speaking children, as is the case with Mark.So,as my routine schedule demands, together we take a tour around the learning centers and I lead him, "Mark, let's do this today!" (#3). But I'm not free to do that all the time. My other students need me too. Especially, if I'm working with a group of students it's not fair to them if I get up and sit down every single minute. Again using peer tutors resolves the problem for a while.

Yet, I never want him to feel pushed aside. It's relieving to show your concern to a child who cannot yet communicate through the language. Often I put my arms around him just to see him at least respond with a smile to, "Hi Mark, how are you doin'

today?"...

No matter what, he is having a lot of difficulty other than the language. I do not yet know whether it's a motivation or a boredom type of problem since he'd already been to first grade. He is very active, a fidgety so to speak. Maybe he's having behavioral problems in the sense that he might be coming from a relatively less structured school system. In my classroom, however, I have kids sit in their places and work independently.... It's one of those puzzling situations, I can't tell why he's acting the way he is. And I don't want to be prejudiced against him, he's only been here three weeks. Besides, I do not enter my new kids' previous school records immediately because I do not want to be pre-judgemental based on how a teacher evaluated them. Instead, I prefer to let things slide off for a while. This enables me to try out different ways of dealing with my individual students in their new contexts. Each child is unique. "You have to read the kids in your class. That's what you have to do!" (#5)

One decision I've made about him is to recommend his parents that he participate in the Summer School, not just for English. I want him to benefit from the opportunity to expand his experiences. He may familiarize himself with different educational and fun activites, such as, computers, writing and games. The idea is he can also improve his language through those engagements in getting prepared for second-grade.

INQUIRY INTO READING: WHOSE PROBLEM?

Six weeks into the school year and I've been beating my head against the wall. How am I gonna teach these kids to read? I've been putting too much effort trying to teach my foreign children how to read through phonics instruction. No one was to be an exception to my so long adopted methodology. My foreign kids, however, kept mentioning that unlike their native languages English did not bear regular rules. Obviously, the irregularities gave them a hard time decoding words phonetically. Eventually, the fallacies of my phonics approach started showing up. I was so upset until I questioned my methodology. I realized, the problem was mine not the kids'. I, then, found the remedy in giving up on the basals and adopting a meaning-based literature approach to reading. This was my little revolution for the year. Since then, as a pre-reading activity I have my students learn a certain number of sight words which they'll encounter in their stories. The familiarity with the words play a crucial role for them in decoding the print and making sense of it. Even those children who were non-English speaking in the beginning of the year have made great leaps in reading. "Believe me, you don't teach the kids to read, you just provide them with the tools and they learn to read!"

Nevertheless, I haven't totally **threw** phonics into the garbage can. Not yet! Maybe I'll change but I don't know. I still put a little emphasis on phonics for different reasons. Unless the students have been through kindergarten in the U.S. they cannot hear and discriminate the subtle differences between English sounds. One reason I teach phonics is to help them have a better

ear and a clearer pronunciation. Then, I also believe phonics helps spelling. When I was a child I learned to spell only through inventive spelling. It's so sad right now that I still have some trouble spelling precisely. I know it's so hard for my foreign children. They can only spell if they memorize the words. For instance, when we do inventive spelling they mix up letters from their languages too, such as, from Arabic. Being a whole language teacher, I do believe that learning to spell is a developmental process but I also think teaching a little bit of structure and a few phonetic rules does help.

THE OPEN DOOR TO COMMUNICATION: lITERACY AS A FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN DIFFERENT MODES

Another problem of foreign children is writing. But I never let that be an inhibition to even the non-English speaking children. "I think writing is feeling comfortable" (#2) so if they feel comfortable putting something on a page that's a start. That's why I even let them write in their own language. Sometimes they may read it back to me in their native langauge. If available, they may read it to afriend who speaks the same language. What if they are not even ready to write in their own language? Then I use different modes of communication. For instance, I might say, "Today, we are going to talk about what we did over the weekend. And that's what we will put down in our journals" (#2). I would ask them, at least, to draw a picture of their experience. I would then have them talk about it to a friend in their own language or to write down a word in English that would go along with their pictorial story.

From my experience, a lot of children feel relaxed about this open door to communication that I provide. Even my little extremely shy Arabic girl shares her stories at least with her own safe group, if not with the whole class. I promote literacy this way because I believe especially at this age, if children feel free about writing down their thoughts in whatever language they will grow more comfortable with it. I believe writing is making available whatever is in your head for a particular audience to comprehend. I never approach writing, "Here's a subject, here's a predicate" (#2). I always remind them that they need to express their story as if telling an audience that was not with them during their experience. If they went to the zoo yesterday, I emphasize to them that their audience doesn't have any information about why, by what and with whom they went. That approach enables them to master the ability to be comrehended by somebody else be it in English, Arabic or French. Then you can go back worrying about their grammar or punctuation. Basically, this particular approach is "process writing", that usually most of us use at this school.

The kids that are starting writing through the open door find it very natural to tell their stories. "Nobody has shut the door on them yet because they are very naive and have a will to learn" (#2). In the upper grades however, they are very afraid of writing because what they encounter is, "Let's write a report on George Washington, or about the State of Indiana" (#2). Because nobody has shown to them how to write they simply copy the information from an encyclopedia. But they stumble and feel very

inhibited when asked to write about their feelings, their opinions or daily thoughts.

UNDERSTANDING GOAL-ORIENTEDNESS: THE ROAD TO EMPATHY

I've been dealing with the problems of Arabic children. Initially, I had mixed feelings about the attitudes of the parents. I would feel upset if they did not attend parent-teacher conferences, if they did not answer my notes, if their kids had absences or did not participate in certain activities. I used to take their problems very personally. That was more at the beginning of the year. "I've got to do something to change this situation.They're gonna want to do this!"(#2) were the ideas that kept challenging me to question my effort as a teacher. So, I would feel guilty thinking this wasn't the way I should be dealing with them as I did not get back what I expected from them. I felt disturbed because the children were not learning the language as quick as I wanted them, for instance. A child like Faridah would worry me a lot. I could not really understand why the Arabic parents did not have enough support for the American school until I talked to some of my collegues. Also after learning from those parents themselves that rather the Arabic school was their major focus, I realized that the problems were actually my problems. I took deep sighs as parents kept giving me support. "Don't worry, they'll soon learn English.", "You'll just learn to deal with it. Don't think of the problems as something that you have to overcome." echoed in my mind as I thought of my Arabic children.

Having discovered that what the parents prioritized for the

education of their children was the Arabic school I learned to empathize with them. They suggested a legitimate reason. Simply, when they return to their countries in a few years, they do not want their children to be placed back a grade just because they can't speak their native language, Arabic. I wouldn't want that to happen to my children if we were in a foreign country planning to return to the States sooner or later. Regarding the unfavorable consequences my children would face on returning home, I would certainly prioritize an American school over a foreign one. Even though I would have them learn that foreign language I would still prefer that they spoke English fluently for the sake of their education and future success.

It is as clear as water now. The Arabic kids have two schools while the other children have only one option, the American school. Each group has its advantages and difficulties but they share one commonality --goal-orientedness, something that often sets them apart into two different mindsets. Something with which I struggled for some time to understand what was going on with the Arabic children in my class. The Arabic children are encouraged probably by their parents to prioritize the Arabic school so that they can be successful when they return home. However, our school is the only one option for the rest of the foreign children. I think, it is a one-shot deal for the children to go to school here and learn English, as it is for the parents who acquired this one-time opportunity to study here. I see the same effort to work hard injected to their kids by the parents. I believe, the children are told that they have to work twice as harder than other children if they want to make through life. If

you asked an Asian child in my class about his goals he would respond, "If I want to get into the best school in my country I gotta learn English and be successful. Then, I can make my way into the best college or I can come back and study at Indiana University or at some other college in the States. Then, probably I'll get one of the best positions when I return home." I don't see such step-by-step goal orientedness in our American children, at this young age.

As for the Arabic children, needless to say, they shoulder a double-schedule. The best I can do to facilitate their lives is to balance out their schedules. I'll slide off on their absences. These are young children who get tired if they take a test the night before in Arabic school. I allow them to come in late the next day or take the day off before a test. They sure need to rest.

My best math student is an Arabic child. Often times the Arabic kids tend to excel in math and are familiar with various subject areas that we do here. It's not only that the subjects they learn are based on universal subjects but that the concepts they learn at both schools tend to reinforce each other. Even if what they have learned is in Arabic, when we do paragraph writing, for instance, they know what a sentence is, how you connect ideas...etc. Often someone reveals, "We know that, we learned it the other day at Arabic school!". That's how I see the double advantage they might have by attending the two schools. Maybe, even Mark, the Brazilian child is well in Math because he had already finished first-grade at home.

THE FOREIGN PARENTS

I send forms to all the families in order to find more about my children when the year starts or as new kids arrive. They also receive my goals and expectations for the year. The foreign parents that are not Arabic tend to respond immediately and regularly. They are eager to understand to get suggestions from me as to how they can help their children at home. Some mothers establish an information network among themselves, as they feel they shouldn't bother me whenever they need to ask about their children's assignments. When it comes to respecting me, it's all foreign parents, Arabic or Other. They see me high on the top of the tower nurturing their children's educational needs. They'd say, "Look what you've done to my child, he couldn't even say a word in English now she is courageous enough to perform in a play!".

Elliot's parents, they feel so thankful. Having come from a less-developed country with less-opportunate schools they express their gratitude to me. You should've seen Elliot's eyes the first day he walked into the classroom. He was totally fascinated by all the bright colors, the decorations hanging from the ceiling, the books and by the computer. No surprise, his parents told me in their school they only had the so-called "blue-books" in which they record whatever they learn from the teacher. Plenty of materials, no way! I admire Elliot because he does work hard to make use of this opportunity that he now has.

Again, there is one Arabic father, an exception, as all Arabic parents can't be the same. He is the only one who responds to my

notes and regularly checks his child's progress by coming to school. He thanks me all the time like all the other foreign parents do when they see me.

American school-foreign home continuation probably differs in Arabic and other foreign homes as well as in each family depending on their educational goals. I don't know what the English language policy is in Arabic countries but the parents tend not to emphasize English at home, a lot. They do not speak or read in English to their children as much as other foreign parents would do. I respect whatever their choice is because they are the ones who makes decisions for their children's future rather than me, the teacher. Yet, even the Arabic parents do not cut off their children from English. Sometimes, when we read a story I hear the Arabic children say, "We know that story. We have the book at home." But I'm aware that English as the most common international language is like a second language in other foreign countries. So, I see the non-Arabic foreign parents doing their best for their children to learn the language well. Besides the kids have no choice because this is the only school available for them.

In fact, it's not only the foreign children adjusting to my culture, I keep learning about their cultures too. I am no exception from the exchange and it is something I personally enjoy. I have developed very close relationships with the foreign families and I keep learning more about them. Our bonds are getting stronger each day. It is through such contact that I have come to understand the Arabic parents and have learned to

eventually depersonilize myself from what I thought were problems for them. Yet, I still think about Faridah and Mark. We'll soon have the parent conferences. Will the parents come? How would they respond to my decisions about their children?...

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

1-A Copy of the Case Study Consent Form

2-Description of Methods

3-Trustworthiness Components

4-Descriptive and Reflexive Journals on Interviews, Formal Observations, Joint Debriefing and Memberchecks

5-Excerpts from Interview #1

6-References

CASE STUDY CONSENT FORM

Investigator: Sibel Cakmak
Indiana University
Language Education
Phone: 335-9160 (work), 339-2451 (home)

The purposes of this project are:
1. to satisfy a class requirement for Y611, Naturalistic Inquiry, Indiana University;
2. to gain insight into the experiences of a first-grade regular classroom teacher with her foreign students who are still learning English.

I, [redacted], understand that:

1. The information obtained during this project will be used to write a case study which may be read by the respondent, the class instructor, [redacted]. The case study will not be distributed to others without the written permission of the respondent involved in this project.

2. Real names will not be used during data collection or in the written case study.

3. Data will be made available only to the respondent, the class instructor [redacted]

4. I am entitled to review the case study before the final draft is written and negotiate changes with the investigator.

5. I will receive a copy of the final case study soon after its completion.

6. I may withdraw from this study at any time by speaking to the investigator and all data collected from me will be returned immediately.

I agree to participate in this case study project according to the preceding terms.

Respondent [redacted]

I (do do not) grant permission to be quoted directly in the case study report.

Respondent [redacted]
Date: 2-21-89

I agree to conduct and report this case study according to the preceding terms.

Investigator Sibel Cakmak
Date: 2-21-89

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DESCRIPTION OF METHODS

I conducted this inquiry through face-to-face interviews with Mrs Walters(pseudonym) once in the teachers' resource room and the rest of the time in her classroom. I made the decision to audiotape my respondent because I believed that was a better way for me to have immediate access to the overall thick information whenever I needed. Another basic reason for audiotaping comes from my belief in communication as exchanging meaning through both linguistic and non-linguistic cues (eye contact, changes in facial and bodily gestures, the tone of voice conveying emotions...). I saw the taperecorder as a tool for our meaningful, uninterrupted communication, the best means, I had available, for capturing Mrs. Walters' construction.

From the very first interview I felt had made the right decision for using a taperecorder with my respondent who was a very verbal, eye-contact person.

After transcribing each interview, I unitized and categorized the information by imposing headings guided by the memberchecks with my respondent. As I started obtaining redundant information from the successive interviews I began narrowing down my categories, based on how Mrs Walters summarized the basic issues after every interview.

Once the interviews, observations, and the joint debriefing were over, I used a card system. I reviewed all my written records (including the memos- comments, questions to be asked and elaborations needed for the next interview) to plug related

issues under different categories that emerged from Mrs. Williams construction. I imposed a narrative structure on the explanations under each category that allowed me to find subject headings. So, I wrote an integrated story that would reflect her construction. I allowed her voice to be heard through direct quotes (See References for source) in order to convey her emotions and to provide support for the explanations. In fact, she approved the way I communicated her story in the case report that she read.

My initial intention was to open boundaries for Mrs Walters to enlighten me on her experiences and feelings that bordered on the initial focus, non-English speaking foreign students. Throughout our interaction it made more sense to broaden the focus. Her construction would not be meaningful unless she related the initial focus to her experiences with other foreign children. It thus seemed viable to adapt a focus that would not be stripped off from its broader context.

A sense of disclosure on the topic emerged towards the end of at least five interview sessions. Note, however, that the topic is still an ongoing process. What I have in this report is only snapshots from the respondent's ongoing construction in a particular time frame.

Following two of the scheduled interviews I observed Mrs Walter's interactions with her students, a social worker and myself as she felt free to talk to me in my "formal" presence. I sometimes felt like an insider but most of the time as an outsider. That situation, however, does not distance me as a positivist since my observation notes are my interpretations inseparable from how I perceived the repondent through my eyes.

During the observations I sometimes took down a few notes which I thought would partly keep me from being perceived as a target of distraction for the class. Immediately after the interviews, I recorded my observations as I recollected them and with reference to my notes. The notes are available in the fieldnotes section of my notebook. They contribute part of the trustworthiness components of this study.

TRUSTWORTHINESS COMPONENTS

The following are the techniques I used for establishing credibility:

1- Persistent observation:

I took every opportunity to observe her and her relationships with others unobtrusively throughout the sessions as well as before and after. I observed her formally twice in her classroom.

2-Intensive Interviewing:

Throughout the interview sessions I reminded the respondent that I was also interested in her feelings and experiences that went beyond the initial focus but related to it as her emerging construction revealed. The focus was broadening as I wanted her to elaborate on the very salient categories throughout the open-ended discussions. I realized that audiotaping helped me capture the respondents emotions conveyed by the tone of her voice and her own words.

4-Joint debriefing:

Going back to my field notes and transcribed interviews after each session I realized that redundancy was building up. Towards

the end of the five sessions I presented the very distinctive emerging categories to my respondent. She and I decided that there was exhaustive redundant information for me to start writing the report. She felt there could be room for minor but not to major questions.

5-Member Checks:

Throughout each interview I made informal memberchecks with the respondent. Formal memberchecks were devoted to the beginning, end of each successive interview and also once after I wrote the the case report. In one instance, ongoing memberchecking really helped me negotiate the meaning of Mrs Walters' intended construction as I was almost getting a different interpretation of her story. Engaging in dialogue through memberchecks allowed for negotiating meaning.

To provide for **transferability** (in the sense that, the vicarious experience would allow another reader to engage in dialogue with his experiences in order to come to a decision or to take some action based on his unique situation) I provided as much thick description as I could about Mrs Walter's experiences and feelings with different children and families, and some information about herself as relevant to the topic. Through my interpretation of her story that she confirmed,I tried to reveal Mrs Walters' teaching-learning experience as a challenging continuous growth.

To ensure **confirmability**, I maintained the following information resources: 1-field notes kept in notebook; 2-a

descriptive and reflexive journal; 3-audiotapes of each interview, along with written transcriptions; 4-an audit trail-No formal audit was conduct except that the respondent confirmed the whole case report. I only coded and referenced the quotations. The whole story was in fact based on my interpretation of her emic construction that I captured from all the mentioned resources and observations at hand.

DESCRIPTIVE AND REFLEXIVE JOURNALS ON INTERVIEWS, FORMAL OBSERVATIONS, JOINT DEBRIEFING AND MEMBERCHECKS

Searching for a respondent, February 15,1989.

I called the principal of the school that had the most international students. I told him what I was interested in and got an appointment for the afternoon. As I told him the purpose of my study once again, he called in the ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher whom he thought might give names of some first grade teachers that had the most foreign teachers. Her first comment about the non-English speaking kids that she tutors a few hours in the afternoons was, "They are just unmotivated. They are not interested in learning anything!" My immediate mental reaction was, 'Oh literature! She talks just like it, what a prejudiced teacher!' I wished my respondent didn't think that way. The principal promised me that he would ask three teachers and the first volunteer would be my respondent.

I received a phone call that night from Mrs. Walters. She sounded like a wonderful and a welcoming person. I could tell through her voice that she was young and informal. We acquainted ourselves, talked a little about my purpose and arranged to meet

on Friday.

Interview #1, February 17, 1989. Teacher's Resource Room 1:30--1:55

Before I met my respondent I was so nervous and excited not because I have never done case studies or not that the methodologies I tried out had tendency to the constructionist paradigm. But whatever I did before was unconsciously done without really aware of the methodology. I only approached my studies that way just because I believed I could only get the best information through such a methodology. I was excited because I was so curious about what I would find out that I did not know. I kept remembering the ESL teacher but also I remembered Dr. Guba "Try to be emic, forget about the apriori prejudices or theories" yours or somebody else's I would add.

I knew she would be in the library with her children until 1:30. I arrived there earlier and familiarized myself with the school environment. Finally I ran into her in the library. She told me to meet her in the teacher's room and talk until her kids finished reading.

While I was busy thinking how I would get her emic construction she rushed with her smiling face into the resource room, very informal as if she knew me for a while. It was like everything accumulated in her mind for a long time that she needed to let it all out. She started by saying "So, you're interested in my experiences with my non-English speaking kids..." She was so actively involved that I had to set up the tape recorder, she realized before I tried to ask, "Go ahead use it , I don't mind".

I only had a few chances to intervene and reflect on what she meant. It wasn't formal as I expected. I couldn't get her to sign the case study consent form. She was about to leave, "My kids are coming!" But I managed to set up our schedule for at least 5 more interviews. She could only meet anytime in her classroom between 8:15-8:55. During this interview she basically talked about her 3 non-English speaking children, with heavy emphasis on Arabic children, and about her feelings and experiences with them. I took a note that I would be further interested in the kids' literacy experiences.

Interview #2, February 20, 1989. Her classroom
8:15-8:55 a.m.

She elaborated on her philosophic assumptions about literacy and talked about how she allowed every child, not only foreign or non-English speaking, to communicate through literacy activities. Her major emphasis then became the Arabic children that gave me the impression that her major problem was with those children and families. She had mixed feelings of worry and respect which she kept emphasizing. The next time I wanted to know more about why she felt the way she did towards the Arabic families and children. I was confused.

Interview #3, February 27, 1989. Her classroom
8:15-8:55 a.m.

In fact what I was confused about last time was what I did not realize. Actually, the initial focus of the study was changing as her emerging construction revealed. I reached that awareness after she looked through the two analysis papers I wrote based on the previous two interviews. She said I did reflect her story so far but elaborated more on her construction as I told her I might

have been getting a different impression of her construction. Since she still focused on her Arabic children I thought that was her only problem, so I asked for clarification. She said the only reason was that it was this year that she had so many Arabic kids going to the Arabic school.

Interview #4, February 28, 1989. Her classroom.
8:15-9:00

We talked about the opposite worlds of foreign children, especially that of the Arabic children. She explained what difference the Arabic school made, how she reacted to its related problems. She incorporated other foreign children, their families, non-linguistic problems once again into her flowering construction. I felt I was getting salient and redundant information as her construction was broadening to allow various interconnections.

Formal Observation #1, February 28, 1989. Her classroom
9:00-10:00

I observed her in different situations within the same setting. She was very active before the kids arrived. As they started coming in she treated them like her own children. I wasn't really distanced because she and the kids would sometimes come and talk to me. I was partly an insider and mostly an outsider. She created a serious formal mood as she wanted them all to know about the tricks of ISTEP that was coming soon.

She suggested that I came a week later because they would be busy with ISTEP.

Interview #5, March 10, 1989. Her classroom
8:15-8:55 a.m.

We negotiated her construction and agreed that she provided me

with enough redundant information that I could write the report the next time. She told me that I could still call or visit her anytime I had any questions.

Formal Observation #2, March 10,1989. 8:55-10:30

As soon as the class started the social worker came in. While the social worker was busy with the children Mrs Walters was full of energy preparing some decorative stuff for the kids. I think she is very informal with people, with me, with the kids, with the social worker. As she said she is very close to people, probably that's why her kids feel free to open up to her. I unobtrusively observed her during the interviews too, she has excellent communicative abilities. She hardly uses hand gestures but it's her facial expressions, her mimicry, the change in the tone of her voice when she quotes someone, that give her theatrical characteristics. It's through her face that she conveys messages of satisfaction or unsatisfaction to her students. I often recorded in the margins of my tape-recorded interview transcriptions that she drags you into her world and experiences just by listening to her through eye contact. She is an eye contact person but looking into her eyes sometimes I felt she wasn't there, sometimes talking to the Arabic parents, sometimes with her non-English speaking students...

Joint Debriefing by the Insiders, April 11, 1989. 8:15-8:55

Having been sick for a couple of weeks, unfortunately, I couldn't write her case report. But at least, I went to orally check my interpretation of her story. Before we met I had read

the rest of the three interviews, unitized, categorized them and wrote down the salient characteristics of her emerging construction. She confirmed what I presented as her unwrapping story and added a few comments with some more examples. She wanted to emphasize that her position on some matters was getting stronger while some others were opening up for further inquiry such as Faridah's situation, or Mark's situation that was turning into a puzzle.

Finally, she gave me the pseudonyms for 3 of her kids and for herself.

Formal Membercheck , April 25, 1989.

I went to her classroom, her son was there alone. Nobody new where she was, she just dissapeared. She came back just before her morning class started wearing her big smile as usual. She has been to the library to search for something to her students.

There was no time left to sit down and discuss. I handed the case report. She agreed to return it in the afternoon. I told her that she could make any comments or ask for any changes that I will consider. Because she was not available I got the report from her mailbox. She wrote a comment that it looked just great and apologized for not having enough time to go through it together.

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW #1, p.6.

And I have a lot of children, in my class, that go to Arabic school. And...a lot of their families... the emphasis is put on the Arabic school and not on the English school. So, I deal with a lot of that, where maybe the attendance is poor or they don't

wanna do as much in English school. And I kind of lay off on that type of thing. I don't want them not to do anything but I don't pressure the parents from home and I just try to help them the best they can. They'll write from left to right. You know, I have to stop and think they're going back to Saudi Arabia or to Libya or to wherever they're from and they need to learn that almost more thanthey need to learn English. And I kind of lay off on that. When they write their numerals, a lot of the things backwards because of the way that they write. But you know, I deal with a lot of that.

I have one little girl (Faridah) and is just not learning the language but she picks up more than I think. And she just is very shy and she doesn't want to speak it...

REFERENCES

The numbers (#1 --#6) written beside the quotes in the case report refer to the respondent's direct statements extracted from the interviews. The source for the quotes is available at the last page of each interview transcript, with the page and the line number given for the particular interview.

Those quotes that have no reference numbers are not exact quotes but edited and paraphrased statements of the respondent. They are only used for the purpose of conveying the respondents feelings and emotions.